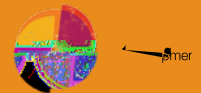


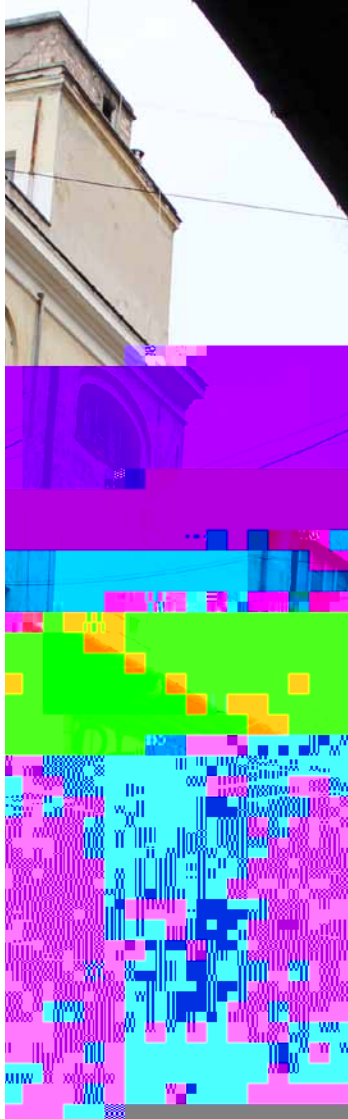
dpu

series

occupation city







Giorgio Talocci    

Azzurra Muzzonigro for LAC

Places & Works

Camillo Boano 

forewords

Occ , & N M

Giorgio Talocci



e New Monuments, Smithson¹ says, are no longer for remembering and learning about the past but rather for helping to forget a future which is dissolving because of Entropy and Obsolescence. Rome is a city of Old and New (or renewed) Monuments whose role has always been to drive a trend, either visible or hidden, formal or informal, in the urban development of their time. We navigated through these Monuments and the city images they wanted to portray when built, and through what they

represent today: Corviale, the swan song of the Modernist utopia and its monumental re-signification through the informal occupation of its one kilometre long floor; the banks and bridges of the Tiber River, and its population of gypsies in provisional shanty towns; the Roman Walls next to the Pyramid and the non-catholic cemetery which has colonised their back.; Campo Boario, neoclassic Monument to the industrial (meat) production, abandoned by the Municipality and become a living collection of people – now Kurdish and Italians but once also Palestinians, Gypsies, Ukrainians – and their stories. Campo Boario² and its open and multicultural square constituted a paradigmatic space for our investigation in Porto Fluviale, squat-occupation today striving to open up toward the surroundings exactly through the transformation of its central courtyard in a public square.

Since the day 80 families (about 250 people from different nationalities, mainly Italian, Ecuadorian, Moroccan, Peruvian, but many more) broke into the building from one of its main gates, the courtyard has been the centre of the community life and the spatial element that more than anything else has helped fostering throughout the years a sense of collectiveness and everyday life sharing.

In spite of the constant risk of eviction (the building is part of a plan through which the Municipality is trying to sell out a number of former barracks to private developers), the community have recently voted to keep the main gate open during the day so to let the people from the surroundings feel free to enter. The process started a couple of years ago opening a tearoom on the ground floor, and went on converting former residential spaces in an assembly room, a bicycle workshop, guest rooms and new rooms for skill-sharing activities.

In an assembly, one of the leaders stated: “we don’t want to open all the gates and make the new square become simply a place of passage and circulation, since this would



intrinsic to a project of a piazza that is open to everyone but chiefly to whom is willing to enter: what if the space opens all its three main gates and its sides become totally permeable? How to open a gate toward something *other*, and not to lose this otherness? How does openness combine with the need for security expressed by many inhabitants?

In spite of these open questions, Porto Fluviale's piazza represents a re-use of a Monument that goes beyond the simple notions of renovation or retrofitting but is rather a completely new one, crafted outside the current logic of urban development. Although made possible through means of occupation, such use leads to question the appropriateness of the term

monument itself: the *re-use* of spaces such as Porto Fluviale today lies indeed in the even more political action of *re-occupying* space and in the new common narratives it entails.

As Laboratorio Arti Civiche (LAC) we act as a multidisciplinary research group with a particular interest on elaborating, together with social groups and local communities, a collective and shared vision of urban space through the means of ‘Civic Arts’. The workshop was the opportunity to kick-start a process that was already in the air for a while.



that of the inhabitants of Porto, and their overnight stay¹ at the occupation intensified the relationship among them. The Tea Room became our office, acting as a meeting place between the inhabitants of Porto and the neighbourhood². The students were divided into groups and were assigned the task to realise the Piazza from different entry points, with the idea to form proposals to be presented to the inhabitants and to the public. The final day, a Saturday, marked the opening of the gate to the city and the courtyard of Porto Fluviale became a new meeting place and stage for interaction with the neighbourhood. How does the occupation want to introduce itself to the neighbourhood? What is the proposal the inhabitants want to make to the outside? What vision do they want to share? Moreover, as a reflection on the quality of urban spaces and social

dynamics, what would be the deeper implication of the very act of opening the gate to the notion of lived space that the courtyard represents in relation to the occupation and to the surrounding neighbourhood of Testaccio? The courtyard's meaning would still embed a substantial shift in the mainstream notion of *spazio pubblico*, as it would still belong to an occupied site, thus translating the political narrative sustaining its existence into spatial relations and dynamics. This narrative is very keen in highlighting how the codified notion of public space results inappropriately, as it does not present any alternative to the dominant socio-economic perspective governing the use of the public spaces in the city. Perhaps it is more significant to think about the space of the courtyard in terms of *spazio vissuto* (Lefebvre, 1991), which would give account to the political narratives dwelling the

occupied buildings. The courtyard would then bring to

building projects to the outside.

All the proposals were supported by the work that LAC was already carrying out within the occupation. Our idea, initially presented to the assembly some months earlier, was to recuperate the image of river port (Porto Fluviale)³ that the occupation refers to, to create a welcoming and inclusive place - a secure port where the different cultures could moor, be received, and experiment in edited forms of inter-cultural dwelling. We wanted to metaphorically populate the piazza with many boats to build together a new proposal of city and citizenship. On the second last day of workshop the first boat, a yellow one, was brought from a nearby lake. The inhabitants started to envision different possibilities, children's adventures, a big flowerpot, a vegetable garden and so on. The boat soon became the object that

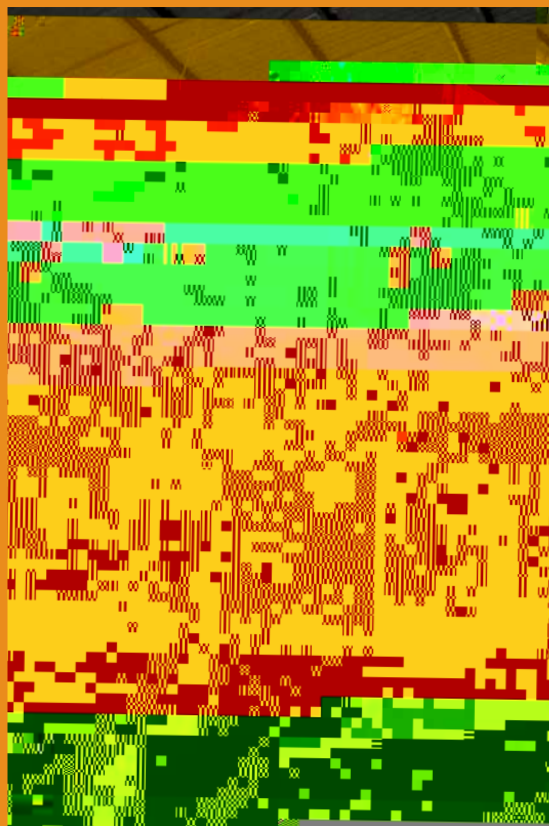
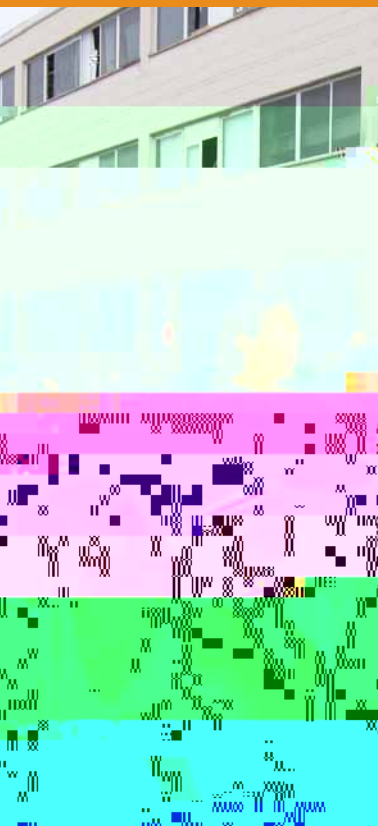
would encompass the different visions and aspirations of the inhabitants for the piazza. After several discussions, the boat was dedicated as a symbol and invitation to take part in this new urban adventure, standing proudly with the prow towards the future and climbing up against the wind, always straight ahead!

Given the enthusiasm of the first day of opening, we thought to go on with this idea, to build together this new urban proposal. From the internal courtyard of a housing occupation, to common space for the neighbourhood, Porto Fluviale becomes the place where migrants, other people that cannot access a house, and those individuals that simply believe in a different way of dwelling in urban space, can start to realise together, day by day, their own Utopia.

PLACES & WORKS

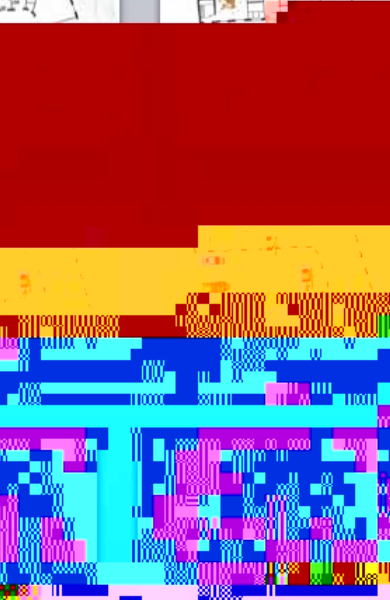
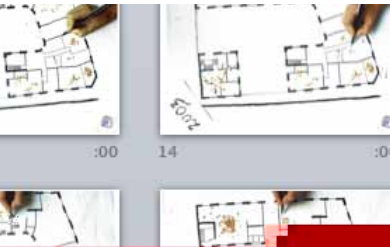
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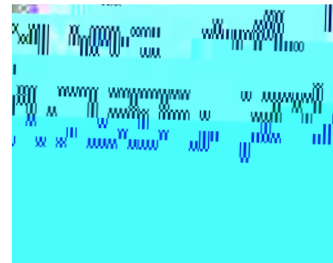


R A C H E L

Mi chiamo Rachel e vengo dall' Ecuador. Vivo in Italia da 9 anni, da quando ho avuto 19. In quel momento l' Ecuador stava attraversando una crisi economica dovuta al passaggio dal Suro al Dollar. Lavoro come donna della pulizia con un contratto contrattivo, cosa che mi ha permesso di portare i miei genitori dell' Ecuador. Al momento viviamo tutti e tre nel mio piccolo Appartamento.

Y U S E I
H E A T

Stiamo sposati e abbiamo due bellissimi figli. Lavoriamo sodo per far crescere convenientemente i nostri figli e questo



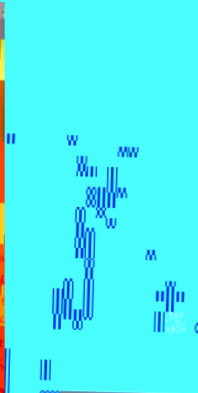
n E

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...to la...

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enti qui al Porto...
una famiglia che spole che
tra a crescere i figli, è difficile
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B E R T O I

...tempo con...
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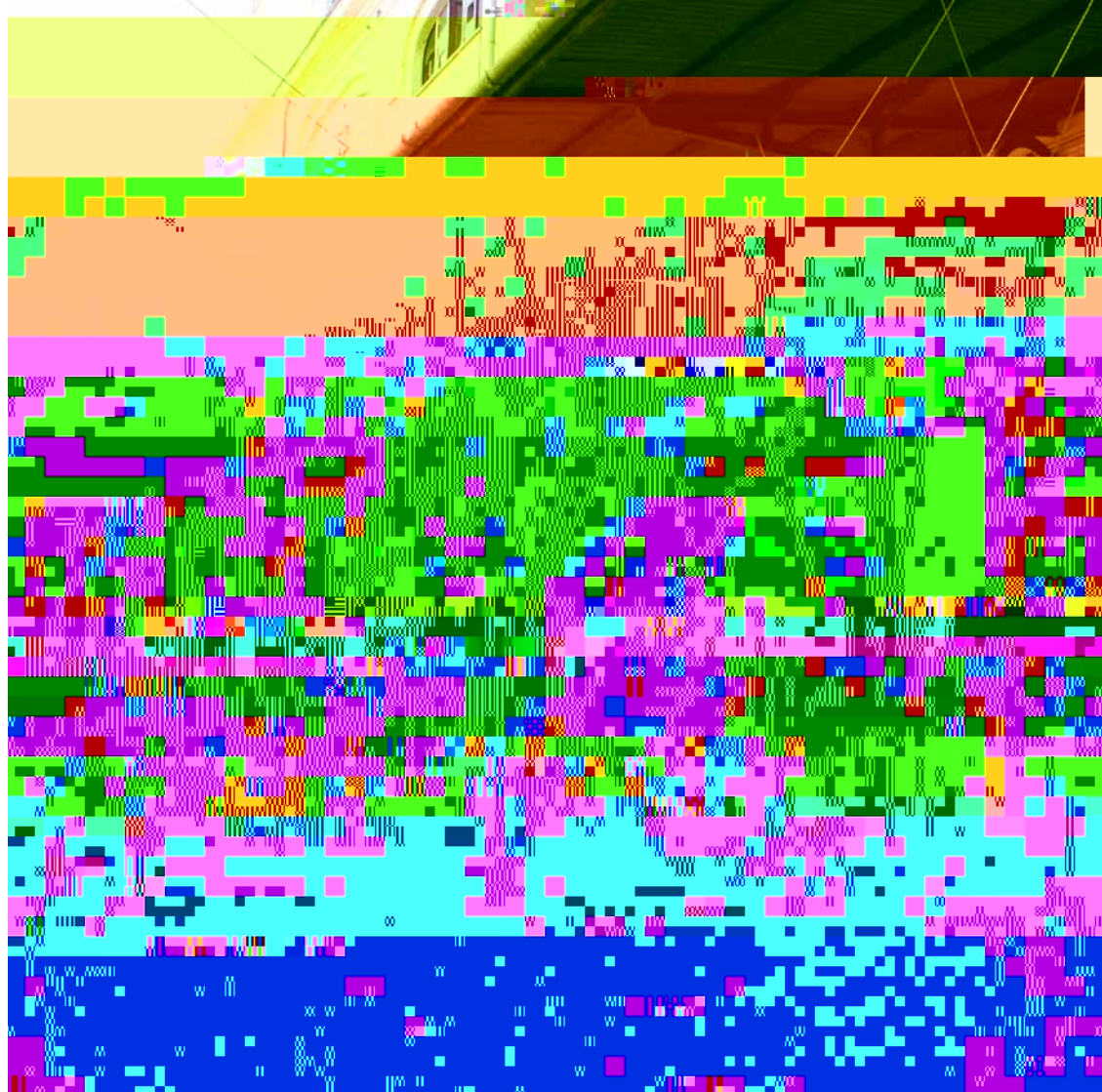


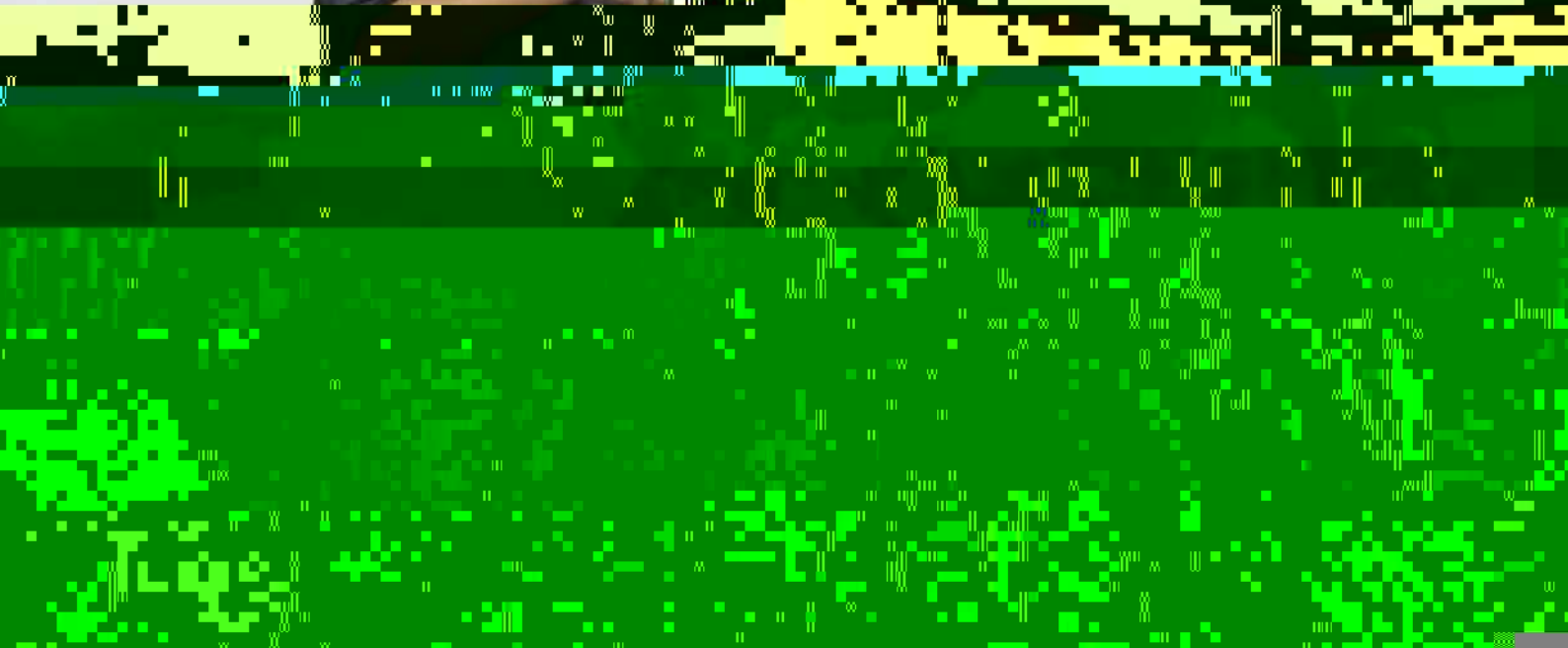
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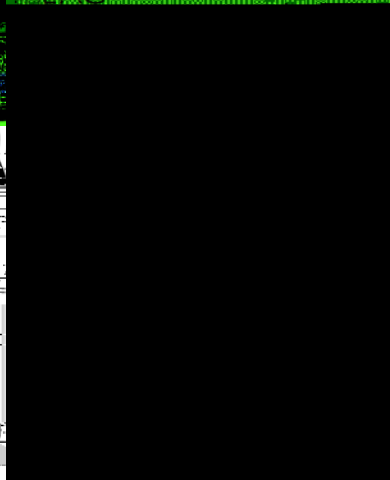
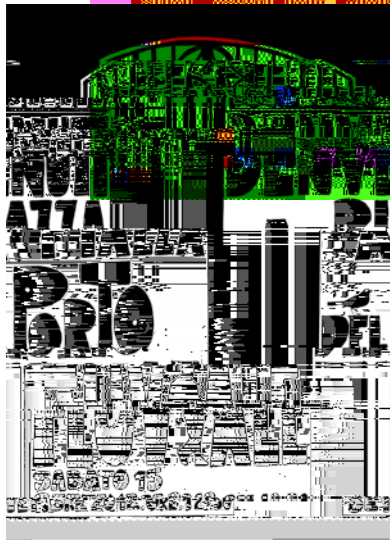
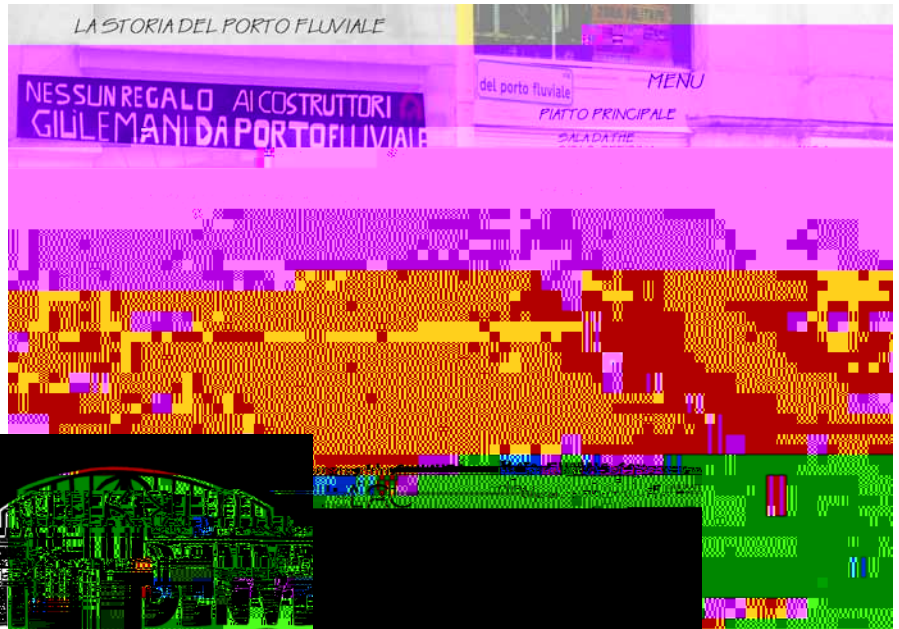


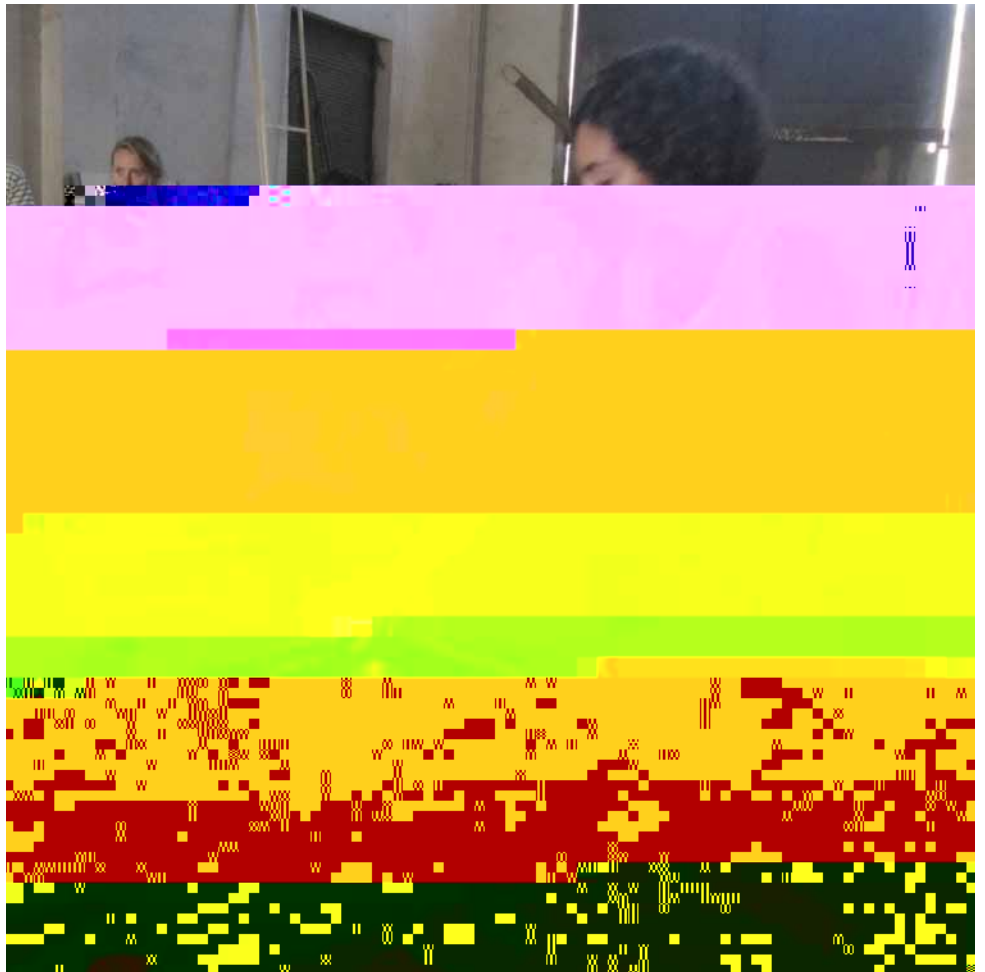
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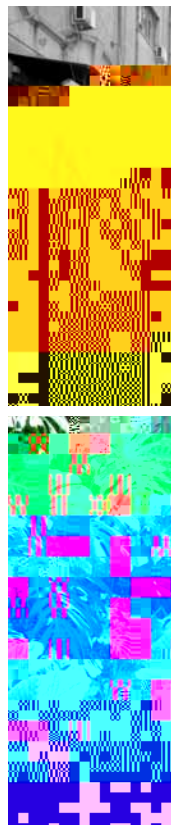
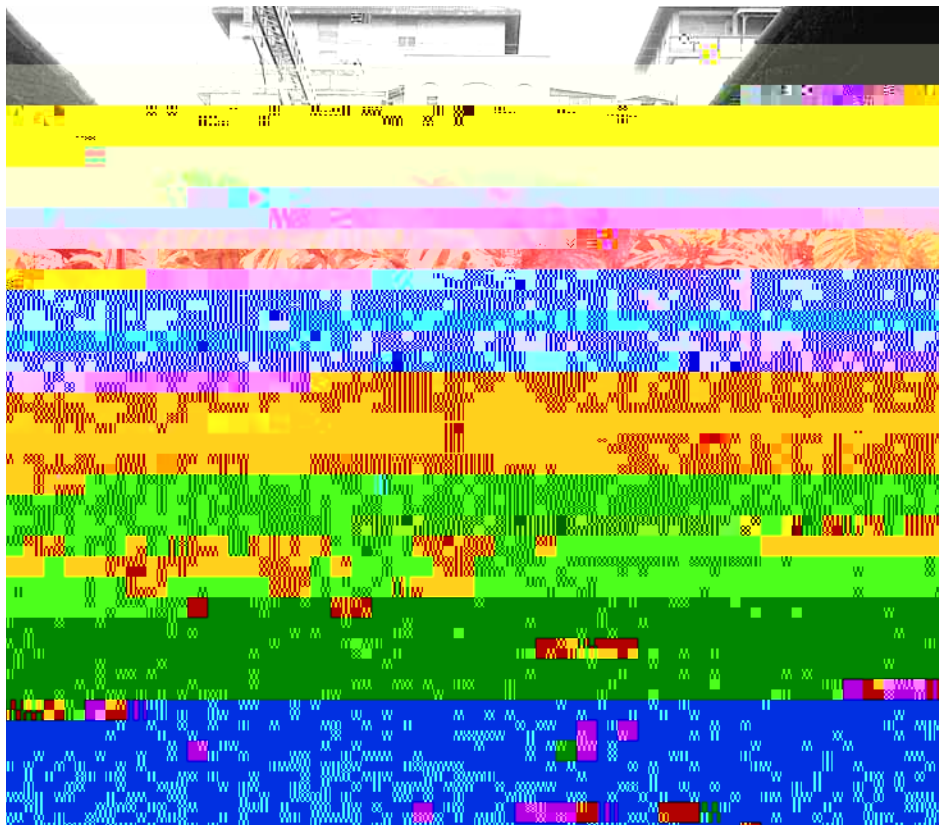
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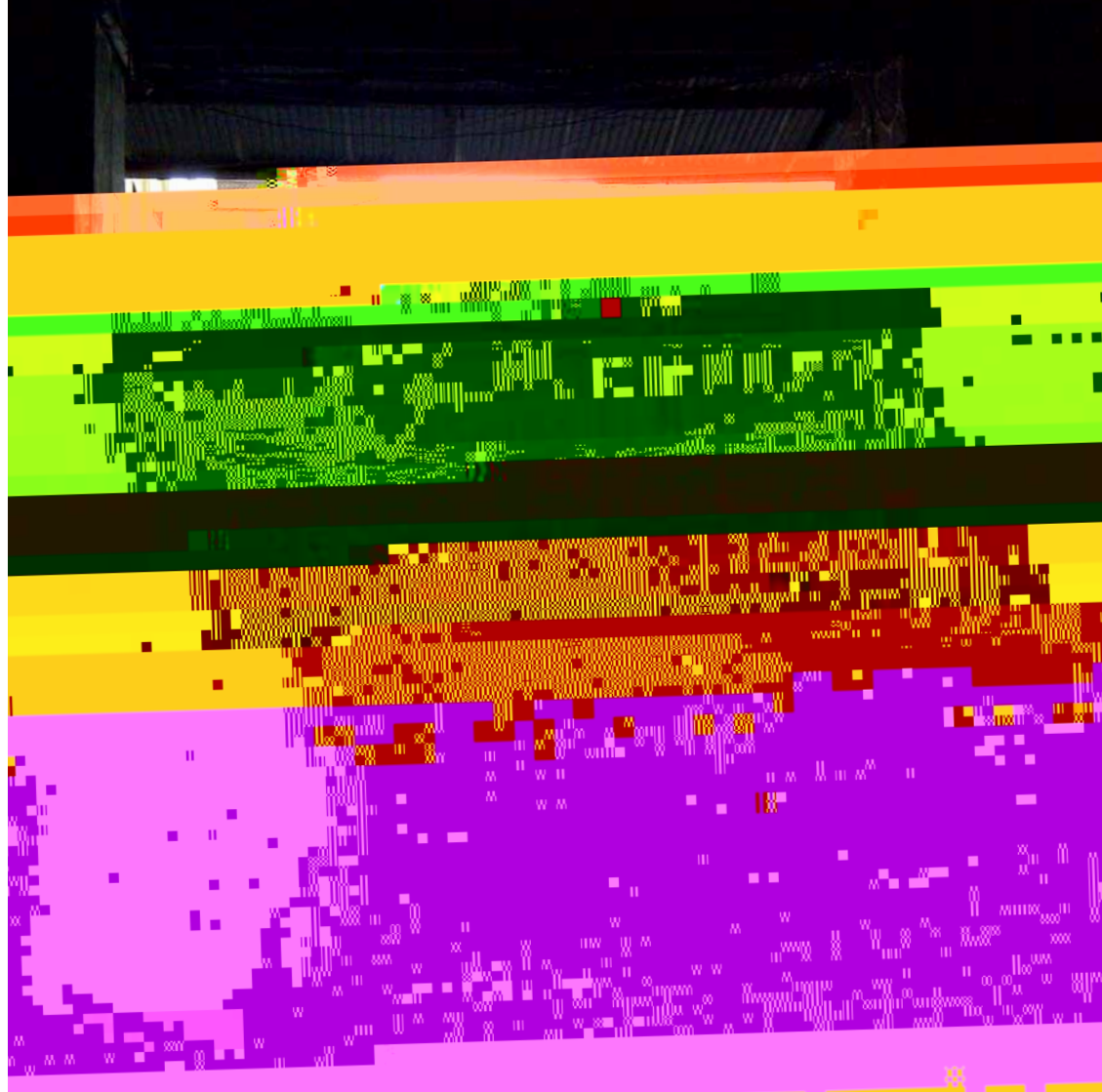




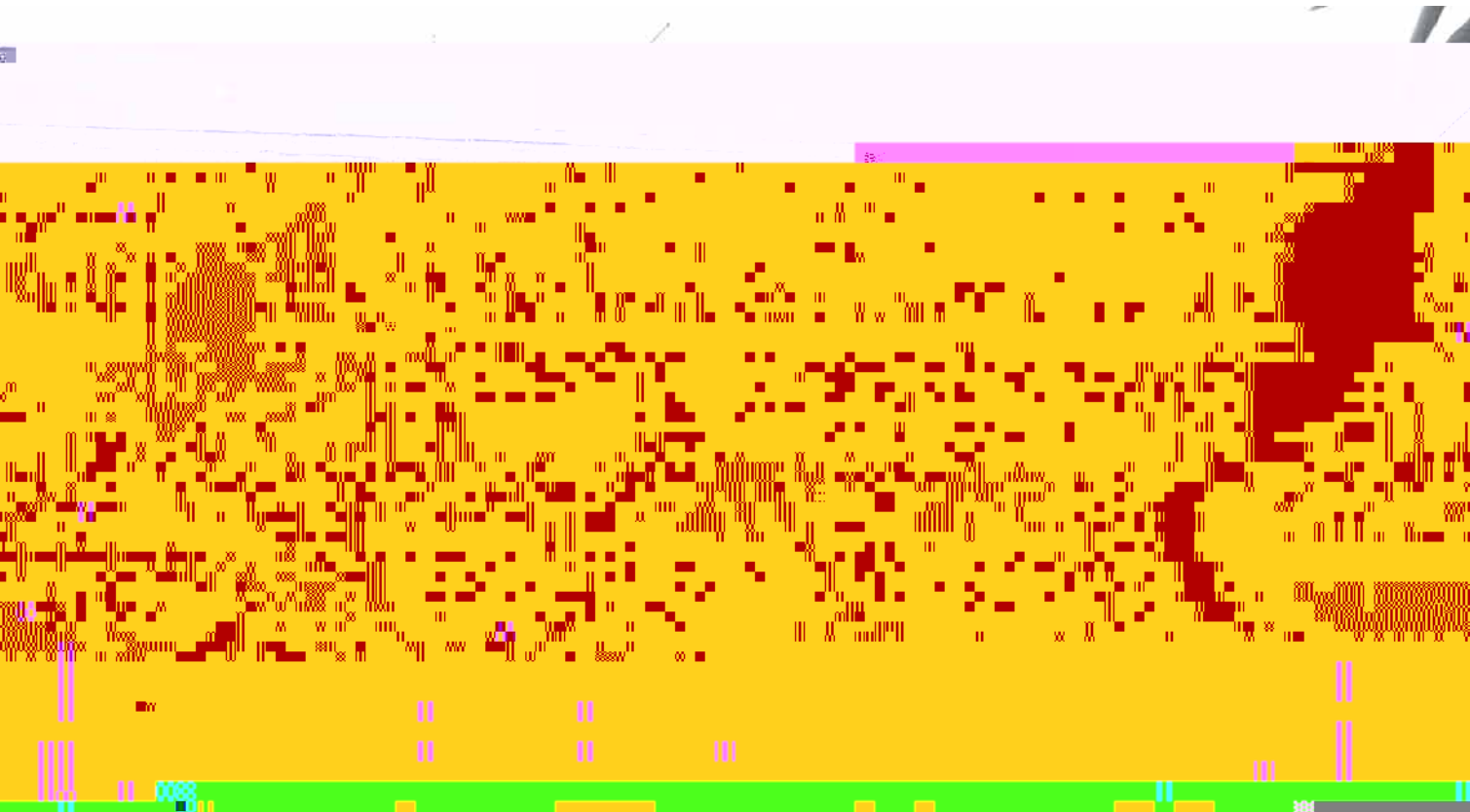


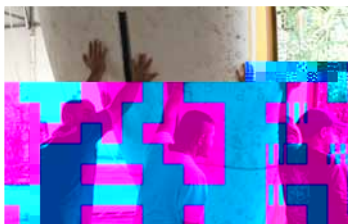
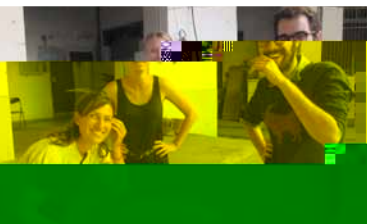
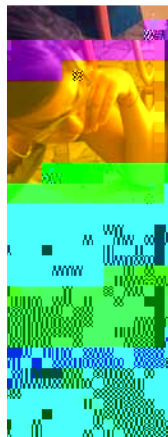
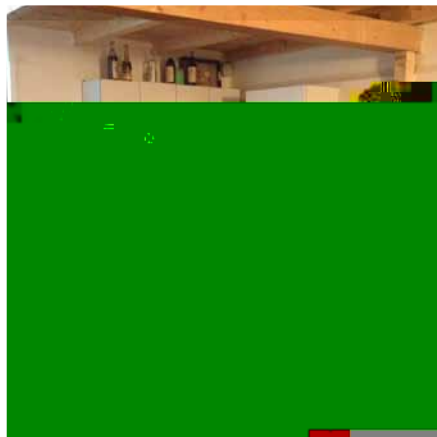
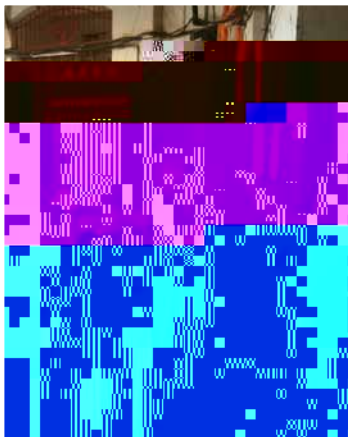


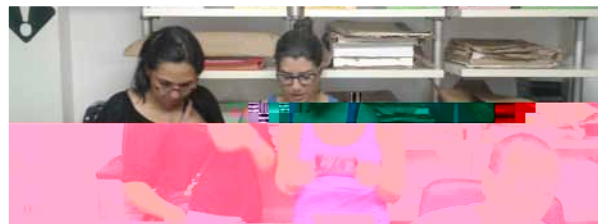
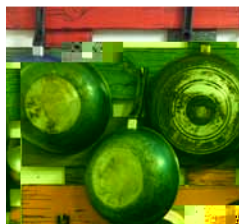
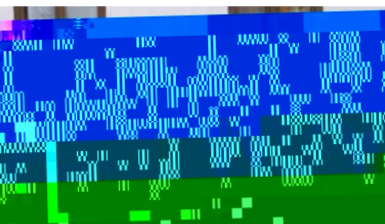
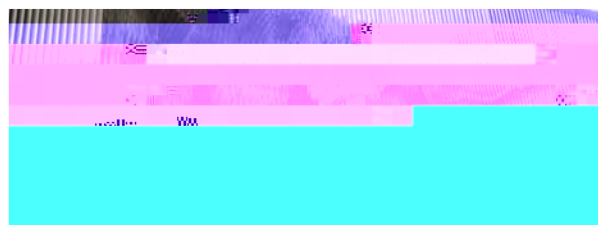
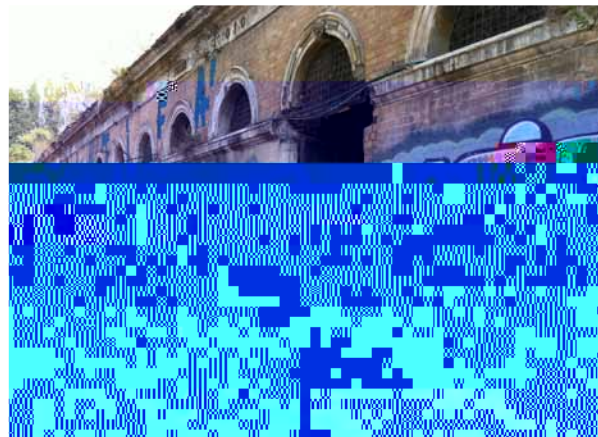
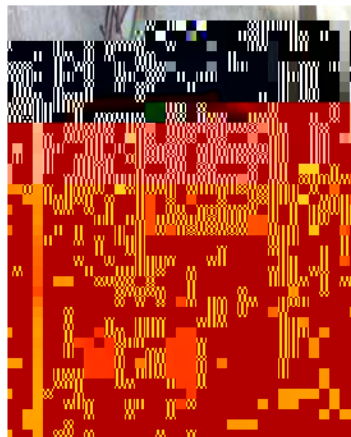












DPU Lab a a a d d a c c Camillo Boano

2012
Occupation City *Liminal Contours*

A few years ago when we began to develop the initial idea of what would become later the DPUsummerLab series, we definitely arrived at a series of challenges. The first challenge was the task acritically engaging with the materiality of urban environments that could (re)interrogate design practice and design education. We thus viewed each 'lab' as an itinerant and flexible learning platform where all participants would broaden their viewpoint to question urban space in relation to

Camillo Boano

social and political issues. The intellectual and methodological dimensions of the ‘labs’ were to be seen as an expansion of the processes developed and experienced in the DPU studio modules where learning is a continuous path of discovering the dialectical nature of the material and the immaterial.

William Hunter

The second challenge was to get away from a certain narrow vision of architectural and urban design, characterised by the mere provision of solutions. The labs then sought to adopt a more nuanced and critical approach of ‘within and between’, grounded in the historical attitude of progressive action-research and practice-led ethos of the DPU. The labs would become an open immersion into both object and social constructs in order to avoid any disciplinary construction of territorial fortresses while suggesting a ‘tactical’ hybrid process of design, both mutable and contextual in nature and undenable by any particular scale.

commercial shipping containers and prostitution zones of peripheral Zurich as a result of the more organic evolution and acceptance of the Langstrasse quarter. Such encounters with urban extremes and the productive forces at stake force us to constantly rethink the role of architects, designers, and practitioners while displacing the centrality of design action into the margins, becoming more aware of the fundamental need of design-research processes that strategically inform tactical alternatives and options. The ferocity and poetic possibilities of places like the Corviale and Porto Fluviale in Rome or Altstetten and Langstrasse in Zurich and their antithetic use of urban idioms suggested the need to develop a trans-design-research that, despite its inherent forward-looking nature, does not fixate on elements, images and forms, but on their processes, their potentialities.

is is the very lesson that Henry Lefebvre once taught us:

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dpu

